

Message Text

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ACTION HEW-06

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DHEW/PHS/OAHS,NIH-FIC (DR. LEAVITT),OIH, HRA, HSA,
NCHS, NIDA, NIMH, ADAANDMHA, CDC (DR. FOEGE AND MR. NAJJAR),
ATLANTA, GA. HDS/RSA(MR. TRAUB AND DR. MCCAVITT),
ONR, NSF.

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, TPHY, IN
SUBJECT: NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES, GOVERNMENT
OF INDIA

1. DR. BALU SANKARAN, 52, HAS TAKEN OVER AS THE DIRECTOR-
GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES (DGHS) ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4
FROM DR. P.P. GOEL, WHO HAS RETIRED. DR. SANKARAN IS AN ORTHO-
PEDIC SURGEON AND UNTIL RECENTLY SERVED AS DIRECTOR-PROFESSOR,
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF ORTHOPEDICS, SAFDARJUNG HOSPITAL, NEW DELHI,
HE IS ALSO HON. CHAIRMAN, ARTIFICIAL LIMBS MANUFACTURING CORPO-
RATION OF INDIA (1972), KANPUR, WHICH HE ESTABLISHED WITH THE
STRONG SUPPORT OF THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER, AFTER THE INDO-
PAK CONFLICT IN 1971, AND IS LIKELY TO RETAIN THIS POSITION.

2. SANKARAN HAS A VAST TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN VARIOUS MEDICAL
COLLEGES IN DELHI AND SOUTH INDIA AND IS CONSIDERED AS
ONE OF THE BEST ORTHOPEDIC SURGEONS IN THE COUNTRY. HE DID
HIS BASIC MEDICAL TRAINING AT THE MADRAS UNIVERSITY, GRADUATING
IN 1948. HE IS ALSO A FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

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A FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ORTHOPEDICS ASSOCIATION, A MEMBER OF THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD OF INDIA ORTHOPEDICS ASSOCIATION AND HONORARY
SURGEON TO THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA.

3. COMMENT: DR. SANKARAN IS VERY HIGHLY REGARDED IN THE FIELD
OF ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY, BUT IS A RATHER SURPRISING CHOICE FOR
THIS POST. HE HAS SUPERSEDED 3 PERSONS IN THE SENIORITY LIST

OF THE CENTRAL HEALTH SERVICES. THE DGHS IS EXPECTED TO ADMINISTER THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S HEALTH FACILITIES, TO PROVIDE OVERALL SUPERVISORY SUPPORT TO STATE HEALTH PROGRAMS, AND TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ADVICE TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE ON HEALTH MATTERS. THE TWO KEY PROBLEMS HE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH ARE MALARIA CONTROL, WHICH AT PRESENT ACCOUNTS FOR OVER HALF OF THE GOI CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HEALTH BUDGET, AND RURAL HEALTH DELIVERY. THE GOI HAS JUST LAUNCHED AN AMBITIOUS SCHEME FOR COUNTRY-WIDE TRAINING OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS WHICH WILL AT LEAST IN THE FIRST FEW YEARS REQUIRE EXTENSIVE PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, AS WELL AS FULL FINANCING, FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. DR. SAKARAN'S CAREER HAS BEEN CONCENTRATED IN TEACHING AND IN SPECIALISED SURGERY, AND HE HAS HAD NO EXPERIENCE WITH THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS WHICH ARE SO IMPORTANT IN HIS NEW POSITION. HOWEVER, HE IS A SHREWD AND TALENTED MAN, AND MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN SPITE OF THIS.

4. DR. SAANKARAN IS KNOWN TO HEW/RSA AND HAS TRAVELLED TO THE US SEVERAL TIMES TO VISIT REHABILITATION CENTERS. SANKARAN RECENTLY REPRESENTED INDIA AT REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL MAY 1977 ANNUAL MEETING IN NEW YORK.
GOHEEN

NOTE BY OC/T: PASSED CDC ATLANTA.
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